any irritation against his opponents. His ruthlessness in polemics never stemmed from a personal grudge—each word, even each slanderous innuendo in his writings, was coldly calculated.

He was, above all, a thinker and a logician, and his strength was in his single-mindedness. He knew no doubt, no hesitation. For him, his ideas represented the absolute truth, his program was the road to salvation, and any deviation from this program was an act of folly or treason. When he treated his opponents in the party as fools and traitors, he was not manifesting bad manners or a violent temper but was giving a precise expression of his conviction. If those who disagreed with him were not fools, they *must* be traitors; if they were not traitors, they *must* be fools. He had a strong messianic complex, but it was completely impersonal. His taciturn, unpretentious wife and his followers regarded him as a man of destiny, but he never boasted or even spoke of himself.

Lenin was simple and friendly with the people and would listen with visible interest to even the incoherent talk of a half-illiterate worker, his big bald head slightly cocked, his narrow eyes screwed up, and an understanding smile on his lips. He liked such talks and often got something out of them. He believed that the masses, left to their own resources, would never find their way to socialism. They could gain victory in revolution only by following the lead of a Socialist party, which, in turn, must be led by the revolutionary elite. But at the same time he believed in the revolutionary intuition of the masses. To lead the masses one must understand them, he repeated time and again.

Lenin's thinking in private conversation, as in his pamphlets and articles, was a combination of doctrinairism and pragmatism. He would elaborate some quotation from Marx and draw conclusions in an irritatingly pedantic way, then inject a reference to current conditions that would give unexpected strength to his position. His thinking was strictly departmentalized—rigid and doctrinaire in theory, highly opportunistic in action. His speeches were seldom spontaneous; he did not improvise on the impulse of the moment. He took time before committing himself, and in his inner circle he let others talk while he listened, nodding approval, smiling, and letting the rest guess whether or not he agreed with them.

His companions would ask him before an important decision, "What would you advise, Vladimir Ilyich?"

Lenin's eyes would narrow to thin slits and he would answer with a sly smile, "I do not know. Let the workers decide. They see it better."

I saw him in a conference at which the workers were airing their displeasure and criticizing his leadership. He listened patiently, occa-